



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC BIOETHICS CENTER

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National

- Biden has nominated Monica Bertagnolli as director of the National Institutes of Health. During her confirmation hearing before the Senate, she was asked about whether the research goals of the NIH would justify experiments involving irreversible “gender transition” procedures to be conducted on minors, to which she responded, “Any research that we do, Senator, with regard to human subjects has to be done in a way that does no harm and produces the maximum benefit to the people that are participating in the research.” Senators also asked her a few questions on fetal tissue research, to which she responded that she would uphold the current Biden Administration policy of using fetal tissue research “as a last resort.” For further information, click [here](#).
- Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker is starting a non-profit political organization, Think Big America, “dedicated to safeguarding reproductive rights and standing up against the right-wing extremists who want to take us backwards.” It is a 501(c)(4) organization, which allows Think Big America to receive unlimited donations without disclosing who is funding it as it advocates for access to abortion. Gov. Pritzker has said that Think Big America will also focus on issues such as “widespread book bans” and “a rollback of voting rights and civil rights.” For further information, click [here](#).

Federal Courts

- A crisis pregnancy center, CompassCare, has filed suit in the Western District of New York under the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act after being vandalized by pro-abortion activists, Hannah Kamke and Jennifer Page. Kamke pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct resulting in \$2,500 damages to CompassCare’s sign, and Page is a self-professed “abortion enthusiast,” having a history of violent “activism.” Under the FACE Act, no individual can restrict access to a “reproductive health care clinic,” which CompassCare asserts includes crisis pregnancy centers. The Biden Administration’s Department of Justice has selectively avoided prosecuting pro-abortion vandalism of crisis pregnancy centers. For further information, click [here](#).
- There are three cases that could be taken up by the Supreme Court in the next term that have to do with federal agencies and regulatory authority, as well as religious freedom and abortion. In *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, dealing with fishing regulations, but is widely applicable to other administrative agencies, Loper is asking the Court to overturn the *Chevron* rule of 1984, which gives substantial deference to regulatory agencies in interpreting the meaning of the law, so long as the interpretation is reasonable. The other cases involve “buffer-zones” for pro-life

activists in Westchester County, New York, as well as a challenge to a Washington State law banning “conversion therapy.” For further information, click [here](#).

State by State

○ Legislative

- Following a 12-week abortion ban in North Carolina, facility-based abortions dropped by over 30%. While William Pincus, president of North Carolina Right to Life, expressed satisfaction over the decrease, nevertheless he also showed concern that the numbers may not stay that way, as the vast majority of abortions take place in the first trimester. For further information, click [here](#).
- Early voting began for Ohio’s Issue 1 initiative, which would constitutionalize the right to “reproductive freedom,” which, among other things, includes abortion. More than 50 pro-life organizations are canvassing the State of Ohio in an effort to defeat the amendment. For further information, click [here](#).

○ Judicial

- The Colorado Court of Appeals has ruled to protect the protect the privacy of persons who requested that public libraries remove sexually explicit books. On October 5, the Court said in its opinion, “We perceive no persuasive argument that the library’s objective assessment of the request or the public good would be enhanced by revealing the identity of the requesters.” The requesters are not party to the lawsuit, which is between a library official and a reporter. For further information, click [here](#). To read the opinion, click [here](#).
- Catholic nurses have sued the State of Colorado in order to continue their abortion reversal ministry. Colorado’s legislature passed a law prohibiting abortion pill reversal treatments, calling it “deceptive” and “unprofessional conduct.” They are suing on First Amendment grounds, namely on the free exercise of their religion as Catholics and free speech bases. They risk loss of their licenses, financial penalties, and loss of malpractice insurance if the law takes effect on them. Their treatment works through the administration of progesterone following the use of mifepristone but before the use of misoprostol. For further information, click [here](#).
- A Sedgwick County judge signed a temporary restraining order forcing the Diocese of Wichita to cancel its annual Mass for Life outside of an abortion clinic, citing that more than one-third of the affected property owners objected to the Mass. The restraining order was signed the day before the Mass for Life was to take place, and, so, the diocese instead held a public rosary outside of the same abortion clinic. The diocese is unsure when it will appeal the decision. For further information, click [here](#).
- An Oklahoma federal judge declined to block the SAFE Act, a law prohibiting gender transition for minors. Opponents claimed that it violated Fourteenth Amendment Due Process and Equal Protection. However, the judge ruled that the classification was constitutional under Equal Protection because it was made on the basis of age, not sex. Further, the judge found no violation of Due Process, finding that the asserted right “to seek appropriate medical care for their minor children” was too vague to be interpreted as encompassing gender transition. For further information, click [here](#).

Religious Liberty

- The Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) wrote a letter to the University of New Mexico after the latter charged a \$5,461.40 security fee to the Students for Life (SFL) on-campus chapter for inviting a pro-life speaker, Kristan Hawkins, onto campus. The University claimed that they believed the fee was necessary to counteract possible demonstrations in protest of Hawkins. After the event, which drew no protest, the SFL chapter worked with the ADF to write a letter to the University, suggesting that the requirement may have violated the SFL's First Amendment right to free speech. The letter asked for a response by October 25, 2023. For further information, click [here](#).

International

- Pope Francis called for a day of fasting and prayer on October 27, 2023, in response to the ongoing conflict in Gaza. The Holy Father said that he “invite[s] sisters and brothers of the various Christian denomination, those belonging to other religions, and all those who have at heart the cause of Christian denominations, those belonging to other religions, and all those who have at heart the cause of peace in the world, to join in as they see fit.” He further said, “I urge believers to take just one side in this conflict: that of peace. But not in words — in prayer, with total dedication.” Pope Francis's statements come as the official death toll of the conflict had reached 4,200, with 1 million displaced by October 18. For further information, click [here](#).

Catholic Resources

- Catholic ministry Behold Your Child, originally started in the Archdiocese of Dubuque, is in the beginning stages of starting work in the Archdiocese of Denver. Behold Your Child is a bereavement ministry that helps couples coping with miscarriage, still-birth, infant/child loss, and fatal perinatal diagnosis. For further information, click [here](#). To see Behold Your Child's website for the Archdiocese of Denver, click [here](#).

Of Note

- San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone and Oakland Bishop Michael Barber issued a letter in September urging Catholics to treat the growing trend of gender ideology with “truth and charity.” They said, “Compassion that does not include both truth and charity is a misplaced compassion,” and further, “Support for those experiencing gender dysphoria must be characterized by an active concern for genuine Christian charity and the truth about the human person.” For further information, click [here](#). To read the letter, click [here](#).

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